



Atlantic Central District



DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

January 2018

Happy New Year!

What makes us happy – maybe fulfillment is a better word.

As followers of Christ, I think fulfillment comes when we follow Jesus' call.

Following Jesus is our mission and Jesus said to follow Him we are to share the Good News with the world.

With 2018 before us, how can we best do that?

I think it is partnering with each other. The early church worked together (read Acts) and at times it was messy. However, it produced fruit and Jesus' mission to share the Good News was realized.

One of the main reasons we need to work together is the world has changed. Many of you have seen this picture:



In Honduras, after Hurricane Mitch, the river moved and the bridge was left standing but no longer connected to the river where its' purpose was to be fulfilled.

Gil Rendle, a Pastor and consultant of Texas Methodist Foundation points out: "Consider the shift in the cultural attractiveness of congregations (as a form of organized religion). It is not news that people are increasingly reporting being spiritual, but not religious. People continue to seek meaning that can be found in the life of the Spirit. They increasingly, however, do not do their seeking in congregations and denominations. The growth in the percentage of individuals reporting to be unaffiliated with any religion has gone through a progressive shift across the most recent generational cohorts:"

Generational Cohort	% of "Unaffiliated"
Silents (before 1946)	9%
Baby Boomers (1946 – 1964)	15%
Gen X (1965- 1980)	21%
Millenials (after 1980)	33%

In the AC District, this reality is playing out. There are 2.6 million people in our District yet, on an average weekend, less than 16,000 people attend our churches across the District representing about 0.6% of the population.

This doesn't mean we are not reaching people and serving those in need – we are! It does mean we need to adapt so we can reach more people.

In March we are going to have our District Training led by Vitality Share Groups across the District. We will have 6 regional gatherings so people can be together in a ministry zone. The theme will be **Strategic Partnerships**. My hope is every church will participate and bring all your leaders and others. My challenge is for every church to bring 20-30 people or more to this.

Why? Because it is good in regions to be in fellowship and see we are not alone and we do have strength in numbers. Second is to learn about various ways we can work together.

The fact that the river has moved means we must adapt or die. Adaptive work is hard and even causes resistance (again look at Acts) but it is also exciting.

My hope is in 2018 we will be willing to take big risks for the sake of the Kingdom and allow our preferences to take a back seat to God's mission to bring His Kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven.

Let me close with a few Biblical themes suggested in the book **Better Together**, that we will need to do this work:

Humble "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in *Humility* consider each other better than yourselves" (Phil. 2:3, emphasis added)

Purposeful "Being like-minded...*being one in spirit and purpose*" (Phil 2:2, emphasis added)

Stronger "Two are better than one, because they have a *good return* for their work" (Eccles. 4:9, emphasis added)

Fruitful "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing

yourselves to be my disciples” (John 15:8) (p. 10-11)

Peace and love,
Gary

January Reports Due:

Church and Clergy Profiles

The clergy and church profile are new this year to EZRA. You can go to the Conference website, scroll down to Profiles (under forms) and follow the directions on how to access. You can also go to <https://www.flumc.org/profilesinstructions> to access the instructions. **The deadline is January 31st.** If you are moving this year, please make sure that both Profiles are completed as soon as possible – and within the deadline. The Cabinet uses these Profiles to help with appointments for this coming year.

Year End Statistics

The deadline for submitting Year End Statistical Tables is February 9, 2018. Online reporting begins January 2, 2018.

If you need any assistance, please contact the District office at (772)299-0255.

Apportionments and End of Year Payments

Apportionment payments for 2017 must be received in the lockbox at Regions Bank or paid on line by Friday, January 12, 2018. This is not a postmarked by date, but is the last day by which monies must be received in the Conference or our bank lockbox to be included in 2017 apportionments receipts. Any payments received after that date will be applied to 2018 apportionments. Any payments received between January 1 and January 12 must be clearly marked as to which year they are to be applied.

All apportionment payments should be accompanied by a completed Remittance Report.

[Click here](#) to access the Remittance Report on the Conference website.

Or go to the website at: www.flumc.org:

- Click “Financial Services” tab on the home page
- Click on “2017 Apportionment Giving Report Forms”

- Select one of the two versions of the Giving Report listed at the bottom of the page

Complete the Remittance Form with the following information:

- Church Name
- GCFA Number
- Preparer contact information
- Allocation amounts for each fund

To pay online, [click here](#).

Any amounts due for Ministry Protection and Health and Benefits at the end of the year will continue to show as outstanding on your statement in 2018. To ensure proper processing of these payments and avoid errors, payments should contain the following information on the check, check stub or statement:

- Church Name
- GCFA Number
- Invoice Number (include all letters and any 0's)
- Allocation amounts for each invoice

When mailing payments to Regions take note of the billing address for each of these types of payments. The last 4 numbers after the zip code are different for each, and it is very important to include to ensure your payment is processed properly.

To be considered a 100% connectional church in the Florida Annual Conference Journal, 100% of 2017 apportionments must be received by January 12, 2018, and all outstanding Ministry Protection and Health and Benefits obligations must be received by December 31, 2017.

Dear Sisters and Brothers of the Florida Conference,

Many of our neighborhoods were devastated by Hurricane Irma's massive destruction in September. Over 2.6 million Florida households have applied for FEMA assistance, which is over one-third of Florida's 6.4 million households. Forty-eight counties were declared Federal disaster areas; 20,000 people are living in temporary housing; another 250,000 could qualify for housing, but either none is available or they are living with family, friends or in tents. [Click here](#) for a message about how you can help by volunteering or with financial support.

Irma impacted 254 United Methodist churches and parsonages, one-third of all our churches. Our conference's disaster recovery team is working to provide hope, relief and restoration to the families and children impacted by Irma, particularly the uninsured, underinsured, those with no resources, the elderly, working poor and single parents.

Please consider making a donation our efforts to help those who were impacted by Hurricane Irma. Both churches and individuals can make a difference. Donate any time by [clicking here](#).

Thank you for supporting our efforts to engage in the mission of God and to restore hope for the millions of Irma survivors in Florida.



Disaster Recovery in the Florida Conference is actively recruiting for Construction Coordinators, Case Managers, Volunteer Coordinators and Volunteer Family Advocates for:

- Naples area
- Tampa Bay Area (Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties)
- North East Florida (Jacksonville and west)
- Sebring/LakePlacid/Moore Haven
- Marathon and lower Keys

Please send resumes with cover letter and minimum salary requirements to mmollica@flumc.org

Please save the date for next year's **Missio Ecclesia** event.

We had such an incredible gathering in the spring of 2016 at Grace Church with Deb and Alan Hirsch. This time we will gather on February 22 and 23, 2018, at First UMC in Lakeland. Dr. Martyn Atkins, a renowned church leader in England and a key movement collaborator in the work of Fresh Expressions, will join us as we explore what it means to be a church on mission.

[Click Here to Register](#)



Missio Ecclesia Church on Mission



February 22nd & 23rd, 2018

Missio Ecclesia (Church on Mission) began in 2016 as a way for church leaders to learn together, hear from speakers on the forefront of new ways for the church to be relevant, new ways to be who we are called to be and continue to make new disciples in this challenging Post-Christendom era. Attend together - as a church leadership team, covenant group, small group, with friends, or another group you feel could benefit from this event. Register early to save.

AGENDA

Feb 22	2:00pm	Check-in
	2:30pm	Worship & Session 1 (Bishop Carter)
	5:00pm	Dinner (on your own)
	7:00pm	Session 2 (Martyn Atkins)
	8:30pm	Reception in lobby
Feb 23	8:30am	Worship & Session 3 (Martyn Atkins)
	10:15am	Snack Break
	10:45am	Session 4 (Innovation/panel)
	Noon	Lunch provided
	1:00pm	Session 5 (Bishop Carter and roundtable discussions)
	3:00pm	Deploy

Register: <https://florida-reg.brtapp.com/2018MissioEcclesia>



Gathering
with people



Talking
with others



Listening
to each other

Panel Discussion

The Missional Church and Innovation in a Changing Ecosystem

A panel of clergy and laity who are practitioners of bringing new ways to reach new people - while in a traditional church



Easter Pilgrimage to Italy with Bishop Carter slated for April 2018

Led by Bishop Carter, travelers will visit Venice, Assisi, Siena, Florence and Rome while studying the Gospel of Mark and the legacy of Peter during April 3-12, 2018.

December 8, 2017

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to extend an invitation to you to join me and Pam, your clergy colleagues, and many of our Florida Conference church members on a Florida Conference pilgrimage to Italy planned for April 3 – 12, 2018.

As we visit the stunning cities of Venice, Assisi, Siena, Florence and Rome, we will be immersed in the rich traditions of the Christian faith. We will learn more about the gospel of Mark in Venice and the legacy of Peter; we will read the dialogues of Catherine of Siena and the meditations of Dante; and we will reflect on the renewing vision given to Francis of Assisi. In Rome, as we visit the Sistine Chapel, we will consider the legacies of the most recent Popes, especially John XXIII, Pope John Paul II and Pope Francis. And in each setting we will be inspired by the world's great art and architecture.

Our ten-day fellowship with each other will be April 3 – 12, 2018. For a detailed description of our itinerary and registration, please visit our website at www.flumc.org and click on this link: <http://www.flumc.org/opportunitydetail/8868904>

I look forward to sharing the experience of travel, study, worship and fellowship with you on this wonderful, life-transforming pilgrimage in April!

The Peace of the Lord,



Bishop Kenneth H. Carter

View more information [online](#) or in this [downloadable brochure](#). [Click here](#) for online registration.



ARE THERE YOUNG ADULTS IN YOUR CHURCH WHO WANT TO EXPLORE PASTORAL MINISTRY?

If so, please give them the attached application for the 2018 Summer Pastoral Ministry Internship Program and encourage them to apply!

DO YOU SERVE A CHURCH COMMITTED TO SHAPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF PASTORAL LEADERS?

If so, please sponsor a Summer Pastoral Intern for 2018!

Here are the quick facts for hosting an Intern. Attached is a more detailed program description.

Internship Dates: Monday, May 28, 2018 through Friday, August 3, 2018

Intern Training Day: Friday, May 25, 2018 (Students and Supervising Pastors)

Intern Reflection Day: Monday, August 6, 2018 (Students Only)

Hours: 30 hours/week as scheduled with Supervising Pastor

Housing: Provided in congregant's home, if needed

Stipend: \$3,500 (\$1,500 by host site; \$1,500 by Office of Clergy Excellence, plus an additional \$500 from the Office of Clergy Excellence IF the Intern attends both the Orientation and Reflection Days)

If interested, please email or mail an Intern Job Description for your church. Please feel free to contact the Office of Clergy Excellence if you have any questions about the program.

Holly Finley at hfinley@flumc.org

Rev. Sara McKinley at sara.mckinley@flumc.org

Office of Clergy Excellence

450 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave.

Lakeland, FL 33815

863-688-5563 x134

Thank you!

Love In Christ,

Sara

[SummerInternProgramDescription2018](#)

[SummerInternshipAPP2018](#)

Dist: All active clergy and churches

Calendar 2018

January

1st - District Office Closed for New Years Day

10th - Leadership Council @ First Vero 10 A.M.

16th - District Office Closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

Gary

Gary A. Spencer

District Superintendent

Atlantic Central District

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